National Health Fund

2291. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted a National Health Fund to provide medical assistance to the helpless and poor people;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government are considering to introduce community based Universal Health Insurance Scheme for the poor people so that all sections of the society get quality health care facility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) On the recommendation of the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, a National Illness Assistance Fund was set up in 1997. Its name has now been changed as "Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi" vide Government's Resolution No. W. 11011/2/2003-NIAF dated 8.4.2003.

(b) The Rastriya Arogya Nidhi provides financial assistance to patients, living below poverty line, suffering from life threatening diseases, to receive medical treatment at any of the super-speciality Hospitals/ Institute or other Government Hospitals. The financial assistance is released in the form of 'one time grant'.

(c) A 'Universal Health Insurance Scheme' was launched on countrywide basis by the Prime Minister on 14th July, 2003.

Treatment of foreign patients

2292. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the light of a number of patients from foreign countries wanting to avail health care facilities in India, Government have conducted a survey on further development of these opportunities;

(b) whether Government have taken any steps to develop Medical Tourism which is expected to fetch 10 thousand crore additional revenue by the year 2012; and